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MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES.

Baltimore, April, 1888.

THE *F* IN FRENCH *SOIF*, *BIEF*, *MOEUF*, ETC.

The problem which I intend to discuss in the present article is this. A number of Old and Modern French words end in *f*, while their Latin or Germanic etyma have a dental instead:—*soif* SITIM, *bief* BEDUM, *moeuf* MODUM, *blef* BLADUM, *nif* NIDUM, *pecchief* PECCATUM, *maugref* MALEGRATUM, *fief* FEODUM (?), *aleu(f)* ALLODUM, *pief* (?) PEDEM, and *buef* from -BODO in such words as *Albuef* ADALBODO, *Elbuef* ELBODO, *Gondebuef* GUNDOBODO, *Gondelbuef* GUNDLBODO, *Maimbuef* MAGNBODO, *Marbuef* MARBODO, *Rusteboeuf* (?), *Turneboeuf* (?), *Paimboeuf* (?), *Quilleboeuf* (?).

The question is, whether this *f* is a regular phonetic development of the radical dental, or, if not, to what influence its origin must be ascribed. The various writers on the subject have answered this question in very different ways: VARNHAGEN in his review of STORM'S *Englische Philologie*, *Anz. f. d. A.* ix, 179 takes it for granted that the dental went through *ð*: *f*, and he undertakes to support this explanation by citing cases of a similar sound-change from all sorts of other languages. Resuming the subject in GROEBER'S *Zs. f. r. Ph.* x, 296, he repeats his theory, borrowing this time his accessory illustrations from the Middle English and recognizing in English *faith* a remnant of the old transitory stage *th*.

GROEBER, to whom we owe the first thorough investigation of the point in question, *Zs. f. r. Ph.* ii, 459 ff., says that the reading *soif*, *moeuf*, etc., occurred first in MSS. in which both final *f* and final *t* were already silent, that thus an orthographical confusion easily arose and under the influence of the resulting erroneous spelling the *f* became later an audible part of certain of the above words; SITIM, *soi(t)*, *soif*. In *moeuf*, -*buef*, secondary reasons favored the persistence of *f*, *moeuf* being affected by the *f*-forms of *mouvoir*, and -*buef* being associated with *boeuf* BŒVEM; *fief*, whose *f* must be older because of the derivative *fieffer*, is traced back not to *feodum* but to the simple *fēhu*. GROEBER expresses himself to the same effect in a

"*Beischrift*" to VARNHAGEN'S above-mentioned article in the *Zeitschrift*.

Other scholars have incidentally mentioned the phenomenon, some of them without indicating their own standpoint. SUCHIER, *Zs.* ii, 298, says simply: "der Auslaut des neufrz. *suif* wird wie in *soif*, *moeuf*, *blef* zu erklären sein." These words of SUCHIER'S are referred to by NEUMANN, *Zs.* viii, 399, without any further remark. FOERSTER, *Lyoner Yzopet* xxxvii, calls the forms without *f* "bekanntlich die regelmässigen afrz. Formen," and so does MACKEL, page 161, and, in accordance with GROEBER, on page 29 of his work, *Die germanischen Elemente in der franz. u. provenz. Spr.*

APFELSTEDT, *Loth. Psalt.* xlv, seems to believe in a phonetic development: "in *nif*, *muef* wird es (*f*) wohl aus dem nachfolgenden *u* oder *d* entwickelt sein." The words "aus dem nachfolgenden *u*" are to be understood, I think, with reference to the theory on *va(d)o*: *vo(is)*, which has been recently supplanted by NEUMANN'S explanation (*Zs.* viii, 384 ff.). GASTON PARIS, *Romania* viii, 135, says: "je n'ai jamais dit que je visse dans l'*f* une transformation du *d* de *feodum*."

So we have, thus far, but two positive opinions to discuss, those of VARNHAGEN and of GROEBER.—I trust that Romance scholars will excuse my passing over VARNHAGEN'S theory as rapidly as most of the authors just quoted have done; since GROEBER, in his excellent *Beischrift*,¹ has thoroughly treated the points in question. I even think that GROEBER, in his reply, goes rather too far in denying the probability that Continental French *d*, intervocalic and final, may have passed through the fricative before being dropped. The analogy of French *b* (*g*) as well as Spanish *ð*, *t*, perhaps Provençal **paðre*: *paire*, seems, to speak in favor of *th* in French also. But that, of course, would in no way save VARNHAGEN'S

¹Groebler says that the Anglicist should not suffer himself to admit a French sound-change which runs counter to the phonetic laws of that language, in order to avoid the difficulty of explaining the *th* in English *faith*.—It seems to me that this difficulty is not so very great. Since we have to admit that the dental became *th* in Anglo-Norman, the word *faith* could very well preserve this *th* in spite of *plenty*, etc. *faith* is the only monosyllabic word of all those quoted by VARNHAGEN, and by BEHRENS in *Franz. Stud.* v, 2, 175 ff. Moreover, forms like *oath* and especially *truth* and others in *th*=Goth *-itha* may have induced or supported the *th* in *faith*.

theory, as long as we do not believe in "Sporadischen Lautwandel."

GROEBER'S own exposition of the case is, of course, extremely scholarly and instructive, and we should willingly adopt his views, were it not for the unlikelihood that, at an epoch when writing played but a very insignificant part in public life, the pronunciation of a group of words should have been influenced by an occasionally occurring error in spelling. Does it not seem more natural that much the same reasons which, according to GROEBER, troubled the Old French copyists, should have brought more or less confusion into the pronunciation itself? The final labials did not disappear in Old French under all circumstances. They fell only before words beginning with consonants and perhaps *in pausa*; before words beginning with vowels they have been preserved down to the present day. So there was in Old French a "linking" of labials, exactly as, gradually, *all* final consonants became liable to be either mute or linked. The forms coming from BÖVEM BRÈVEM, NÖVUM, etc. were pronounced either *bue*, *brie*, *nue* or *buef(v)*, *brief(v)*, *nuef(v)*, according to the following word. The same with final dentals originally preceded by consonants (*a—at*, *o—ot*, etc.), and hence an uncertainty of the "Sprachgefühl" and a tendency to pronounce a *t* or *f* even where there was no etymological warrant for doing so. Examples for such confusion in Modern French are the often quoted *c'est pat à moi*, *c'est poinz à vous*, etc., and *aime-t-il*. In principle it makes not the slightest difference that the Latin etymon of *aime-t-il* happens to have a *t* at the corresponding place, the *t* of *aime-t-il* being in no causal nexus whatever with the *t* in AMAT ILLE. In this case the unetymological *t* became firm under the continued influence of *est il*, *at il*, *peut il*, etc. Our *f* may better be compared with *d* in Oldest French *ned*, *sed*, or with *r* in Modern English *idear*, cf. MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES ii, 227. First it was pronounced and written only occasionally, and became usual only in words in which it was favored by some accessory reason (like the *t* in *aime-t-il*). Such secondary reasons GROEBER himself adduces for all the words in question except *soif*, where he believes in the

sole influence of spelling. *Soif*, however, very naturally followed the *f*-forms of *boivre*, as has been suggested by SCHUCHARDT, *Literaturblatt für germ. u. rom. Phil.*, 1887, 22.

Thus the explanation we have proposed might be perfectly satisfactory, if other considerations did not suggest or rather require quite an other manner of regarding the case:

ASCOLI, in one of his *Lettere glottologiche* (*Ascoli-Güterbock*, 206) treats of our French words in connection with similar phenomena in Ladinian, Provençal and Catalan, and says that forms like *mœuf*, *nif* must not, as GROEBER would have it, be looked upon as late graphical deviations, but that, similar forms extending over as large a territory as "von den Quellen des Rheins bis zur Mündung des Ebro," they must be the result of some phonetic development, and that they require in their etyma not the group *-du* but *-ud*: *niud*, *moud* instead of *nidu*, *modu*. Now, such Latin etyma might very happily explain our Romance forms, but the difficulty is that the Latin words are in fact not *niud*, *moud*, but *nidu*, *modu*, and there is no phonetic law according to which *-du* should become *-ud*. ASCOLI calls the supposed transformation a "vocalattraction," and refers to such forms as *seule*, *reule*; but *seule*, *reule* are to be explained in a different way, and cannot hold good against *vieil*, *ueil*, *peril*, *espalle*, etc. At all events, "vocalattraction" is a rather vague expression, and sounds very much like a circumlocution to express an unexplained fact. It is a pity that our venerated Italian *Maestro*, like his great Florentine countryman, sometimes uses a certain *parlar coperto*, or even keeps back entirely his last word on the subject he is treating. In our case, however, the dental in the supposed etymon **niud*, etc., makes it evident that ASCOLI either believes in some sort of metathesis, which in fact is not much better a term than "vocalattraction," or that he means a kind of *u-* or *o-Umlaut* (*d* labialized by a following *u* or *o* and developing a *u* before itself), similar perhaps to FOERSTER'S *i-Umlaut* (*Zs. f. r. Ph.* iii). This comparison, I think, suggests at once the definite solution of the problem. FOERSTER'S proposed law has been, as I take it, successfully modified by NEUMANN in his

admirable articles on *Satzdoubletten* (Zs. viii). May not ASCOLI's theory call for a similar modification? Indeed, a type *-du*+vowel: *du*: μ would explain the Surselviau *portau*, etc., as well as Provençal *alloc* and our French forms, while the Catalan would remain about as difficult as they are with ASCOLI.—NEUMANN, in Zs. viii, has not neglected to take into consideration the development of consonant+ μ in French, and he has even devoted a special essay to this subject in the *Caix-Canello Miscellanea*, 167-174. It is strange that in treating of French *alou* it has escaped his attention that *nif* is a form of the same character, and therefore he did not realize that all our French words with *-f* come under the same category. I think it was because of two objections which might possibly be made that NEUMANN declined to identify the two cases. The question is (1) whether μ would become *f* and (2) whether consonant+ μ is compatible with a diphthong in the preceding syllable (*-buef*, *bief*, etc.). As to the first question, a "consonnification de l'*u*" is posited by BONNARDOT (*Romania* v, 326-7), but no explanation is given of the development. The μ naturally was a *v*, as soon as the following word began with a vowel, and this *v*, when generalized, became an *f* in *pausa*. Words which clearly show this are: ANTIQUUM, *antikvo*, *antiv(o)* *antif*; here the *v*-form was favored by the feminine *antive*, but not necessarily produced by it;—*Iudaicum*, *judeo*+vowel, *judeu*, *ju(d)ev*, *juif* (the *i* presents difficulty, but in any case has nothing to do with our theory);—VIDUUM, *veduo*, *veuo*+vowel, *veuu*, *veuv*, *veuf*; here, I think, the feminine was originally *veue veve*, and *eu* came from the masculine. We may very well suppose, then, that *nidu*+vowel became *nidu*, *niu*, *niv*, *nif*; and so the other forms.

A much more difficult question is that which concerns the diphthongization of the root-vowel before consonant+ μ .

NEUMANN keeps strictly to the rule that consonant+ μ forms position, and indeed the words which he treats agree with such a view. But, in the first place, I do not see why the *ie* in *bief*, *ue* in *buef*, etc., cannot be understood just like the *e* in *queu* (Zs. viii, 399). The cases are perfectly parallel. I do not insist

however upon this possibility, because I am not at all convinced that consonant+ μ always² constituted position; μ could very well, under favorable accentuation, preserve enough of its vowel character to form something like a syllable of its own, and make the radical vowel "libre." (Hence, perhaps, the trisyllabic Provençal *vezova*, Ital. *vedova*.) Cf. further the development of the parallel group consonant + \dot{i} in *PODIUM pui*, *MODIUM mui*, *CORRIUM cuir*, *OLEUM huile*, *IMPERIUM empire*, *POSTIUS puis* and especially that of *AQUA ewe* (besides *aiwe*) *EQUA ive*, *SEQUERE sivre*. Moreover, the question of "Romance position" is still very much open to doubt; cf. *es* (APES), *assez*, *tiede*, *Estiefne*, *Jumieges*, *terre*, *nies*, *fienme*, *vieil*, *oirre*, *tonoirre*, *doivle*, *foivle*, *juefne*, *ues*, *nucit*, etc., as against *at*, *asne*, *malade*, *anme*, *jofne*, *Estefre*, *seule*, *reule*, *dette*, *erre*, *tonerre*, *manege*, etc. Although some of these differentiations may be due to some analogy, it would be difficult to show the probability of such or any other secondary influence for *all* the forms concerned. I feel sure that it depended entirely on the greater or less stress a word happened to have in fluent speech. Cf. MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES i, 110 ff. All these differences are indeed easily accounted for by an explanation which is of course but an hypothesis, but which has perhaps the advantage of greater likelihood as compared with other ideas of a similar character.

I do not hesitate then, to recognize the result of consonant+ μ in the *f* of all the French words mentioned above. *Soif*, *faudestuef*, and the doubtful *pief* (Tobler in the *Caix-Canello Miscellanea*, 72; Groeber in Zs. x, 293) owe their *f* to analogy, and it has been explained above that wrong linking was much favored by the conditions of final *f* and *t* in Old French. *Pecchief* may have been in-

²Cf. G. PARIS, *Romania* XIV, 157 ff., and again NEUMANN, *Literaturblatt* VI, 305 ff. The mere fact that of two such scholars as PARIS and NEUMANN, the first believes that cons. + μ did not form position, while the latter is convinced of the contrary, seems to show that here, as often, the truth is between the two extremes.

It is true, as NEUMANN says, that *sivre*, *ive* can no more than *lit*, etc., be quoted as not forming *Latin position*; but they show the prolonged effect of TEN BRINK's law and are therefore of importance where *Romance* or *Gallo-Latin* position is concerned.

fluenced by *mechief*; *maugref* by *gr(i)ef*; *-buef* by *bûvem*, according to Groeber; and the forms *Beuves*, *Bouvin*, *Buovo* may perhaps be quoted in favor of this analogy.—As to *fief-fieffer*, it seems to me that we should rather expect the group *fief-f(i)ever* to be the regular correspondence; cf. *grief-gr(i)ever*, *chef-achever*, etc. I understand the *ff* of *fieffer* in another way: the analogy of *chauffer*, *calfar*—CALEFACERE seems to justify the assumption that the common formula *feodum facere* grew together to *feoffacere*, which, by contraction and change of conjugation, became *feoffar(e)*. This may then have favored the development and persistence of the labial in the noun.—*Soif*, as we learned from SCHUCHARDT, followed the *f*-forms of *boivre*: *jo boif car j'ai soif*.*

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Since the above was in type, I find that ASCOLI has published in *Archivio Glottologico* x, 2, pp. 260 ff., another essay connected with our subject, entitled "Il tipo gallo-romano *seuv*=SEBŌ etc."

This essay is a reproduction of ASCOLI'S 'Widmungsschreiben an Francesco d'Ovidio, Sprachw. Briefe, i-xvi,' "con qualche omissione e alcune aggiunte," repeating, and defending against the objections of W. MEYER and GROEBER (*Zs.* xi, 283-288), the Gallo-Roman "attrazione," which in a sarcastic note (cf. 'Sprachw. Briefe' x) he again explains as anticipation of the final vowel, protesting against labialization of the intermediate consonant. He also thinks it necessary again to insist that he has "il più profondo rispetto per la scienza in generale e in specie per la fisiologia e anche per la psicologia."

This certainly nobody would ever venture to doubt, nor should we deny that a man like ASCOLI may claim the right to use such expressions and to use them in such sense as he chooses. We only protest against vague expressions, because others, *dei minorum gentium*, might very soon hide under general

terms a lack of clearness in their own ideas. This must be avoided, and therefore we should have been thankful to ASCOLI if he had vouchsafed to tell us, in simple language, whether his "attrazione" must be considered a merely psychological process, or whether it is due to physiological causes also. If the latter be the case, we must protest against the possibility that any sound can influence another element of speech, unless both are in immediate connection with each other, the line being unbroken by any intermediate element which remains intact. The modern Piemontese-Ligurian *boin*=BONI cannot prove anything, because the *n* may very well have been palatalized when the *i*-sound was developing before it; and the same with the other forms. So I continue to consider any such "attraction" as *Umlaut* in the above-mentioned sense of the word. The practical question now is, did this "attrazione" or *Umlaut* take place in French under all circumstances, as ASCOLI says? Theoretically there is no objection to such a law, and I am especially glad that ASCOLI, in the course of his investigations, has had occasion to state once more the fact that all unaccented vowels in Latin did not fall at the same time, but that long vowels naturally had more *tenacità* than short ones. In fact it has always been one of my favorite ideas, that no mechanical law will ever be found covering the disappearance of unaccented syllables, their existence being entirely at the mercy of the *momentary conditions* of speech; but that, generally speaking, *long syllables* offered the *longest resistance*; and I have brought this into connection with similar features in TEN BRINK'S law (cf. MOD. LANG. NOTES i, 210-227). Moreover ASCOLI, by making his Gallo-Roman law appear to be the natural consequence of parallel processes in the language of the original Celtic race, opens to our eyes such a wide and dazzling perspective, that at first sight one feels inclined enthusiastically to accept the new discovery of our master; and I confess that when I first read the 'Widmungsschreiben' I came very near giving up all my previous notions as regards our case; but there are reasons which prevent me from adopting ASCOLI'S law:

*This article was intended for our March issue but a delay in the mails prevented it from reaching us in time and consequently it appears with postscript in the present number.

Eds.

1. According to ASCOLI we should have to admit a sound-change *niud*: *nivd*; *antiug*: *antivg*, etc. I, for one, think it simply impossible that *iu* before consonants should become *iv*, the opposite change being the only probable one in French. It is not possible, either, to propose a series *niud*, *niu*, *niv*, because—and this leads us to the

2d objection—final *d* does not disappear in prehistoric French, and we should expect therefore to find in Oldest French forms like *niud* etc., which, however, do not occur anywhere in the language.

3. Even if the intermediate type **niud*, **antiug* may be supposed to have existed in the language without ever occurring in the preserved documents,—a fact which in itself is not at all impossible,—is it not strange that phonetic conditions like final *ð*, which occurred so frequently in Latin, should have left so very few traces in the whole French language? The rare occurrence of a certain phonetic development is, of course, the more natural, the more its conditions are restricted, as is the case in our own theory: *nidu*+vowel: *nidv*: *nidv*: *niv*: *nif*.

One point in my theory I seem not to have treated thoroughly enough, because I really did not think that any difficulty could arise as to the question whether *u* could become *v* and *f*. This has been denied by W. MEYER and GROEBER (*Zs.* xi, l. c).

It is true that ASCOLI has already thrown the weight of his authority into the other balance, but, as we have seen under number 1, we cannot avail ourselves of his assistance, since his own proposition seems to us altogether impossible. Accordingly, we must answer for ourselves.—MEYER does not believe that *u*, being bilabial, would become dentilabial *v*. It might be difficult to hold to this objection in principle, when we think of Germanic bilabial *uu* becoming bilabial fricative *w* in South German, dentilabial *w* in North German, and occasionally *f* in North German dialects; e. g., Goth. *weis*, S. G. *wir*, N. G. *wir*, Soest. *fui* (cf. HOLTHAUSEN, 'Soester Mundart.') Compare, further, Norwegian *f*, which according to HOFFARY was bilabial in Old Norse. In Gallo-Roman itself Indo-Germ. *u* as well as *gʷ*, *gʷ* became

dentilabial *v* (VANUS, VENIRE). In short, the transition of *u* to dentilabial *v* is an entirely common one, and the question can only be, does it agree with French sound-change? GROEBER admits that Germanic *u* became *v*, as is necessary for his etymology *fēhu*: *fief*. What the difference could have been between Germanic *u* and Latin *u* is hard to see; but, of course, any statement based on personal convictions may be supported, as long as nothing militates against it. So we shall have to look out for instances among French words of Latin origin;—and I wonder how W. MEYER and GROEBER explain forms like *janvier*, *veuve*, *veuf*, *antif*.

G. K.

STRONG VERBS IN AELFRIC'S SAINTS.—I.

Of the thirty-nine homilies mentioned in the table of contents prefixed to the MS. of the 'Saints' the first and second parts of SKEAT's edition contain 1-23. The 'Interrogationes Sigewulfi' (I. S.) forming number thirty-seven is edited by MCLEAN in *Anglia* vii, 1. These texts form the basis of this study.

The plan of the work is as follows. Adopting the classification of SIEVER's grammar, there is first given a list of all verbs that occur in each class in the forms which their infinitives have, or would have according to the analogy of the forms that occur. If the verb is not used without a prefix it is preceded by a hyphen, and the prefixes with which it is used are placed in alphabetical order after each verb.

The citations are arranged below in the order of the ablaut-vowels, so that all forms with like vowels appear together. Where all is regular according to West Saxon standards, I have not thought it necessary to cite every passage, but I have endeavored to give one citation for every form that occurs. Where there is any irregularity, or where two spellings are used for the same form, I have given the citations in full. The references are to the pages of SKEAT and to the lines of the 'Interrogationes.' All marks of accent or quantity are omitted except in so far as they occur in the MS. Here I have given all cases where